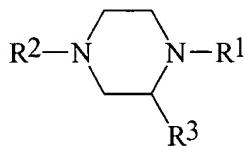


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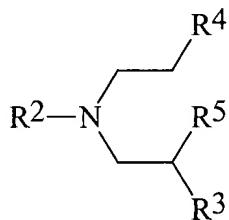
IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for preparing a compound of the formula



wherein R¹ denotes phenylalkoxy, tosyl, benzoyl, or formyl; R² denotes alkyl, ~~alkoxy, phenyl, phenyloxy or phenylalkoxy~~; and R³ denotes phenyl,

comprising the step of reacting a compound of the formula



wherein R² and R³ are as defined above and R⁴ and R⁵ are independently selected from the group consisting of fluoro, chloro, bromo and iodo,

with a compound of the formula H₂N-R¹, wherein R¹ is as defined above.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein R¹ is selected from the group consisting of formyl, benzoyl, and tosyl.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein R¹ is tosyl.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein R² is methyl.

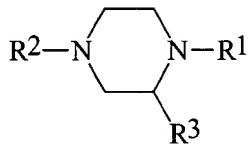
5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein R⁴ is chloro.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein R⁵ is chloro.

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8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the reaction is performed in a solvent selected from the group consisting of DMF, DMAC, ethers, ethyleneglycol dimethyl ether, diethyleneglycol dimethyl ether, propyleneglycol dimethyl ether, DMSO, xylene, benzene, ethylbenzene, acetonitrile and toluene.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said solvent is DMF.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of adding a strong base.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said strong base is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, sodium hydride, potassium hydroxide, potassium hydride, sodium methoxide and sodium amide.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the base is sodium hydroxide.
13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the base is sodium hydride.
14. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of removing R¹ by hydrolysis.
15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein R¹ is removed by hydrolysis using a strong acid.
16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, phosphoric acid and p-toluene sulfonic acid.
17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the acid is sulfuric acid.
18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the sulfuric acid has a concentration of about 98%.
- 19-48. (Canceled)
49. (Previously presented) A compound of the formula:



IV

wherein R^1 denotes tosyl, formyl, or benzoyl; R^2 denotes methyl; and R^3 denotes phenyl.

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50. (Canceled)

51. (Canceled)

52. (Canceled)

53. (Canceled)

54. (Canceled)

55. (Canceled)

56. (Canceled)

57. (Canceled)

58. (Canceled)

59. (Canceled)

60. (Canceled)

61. (Canceled)

62. (Canceled)

63. (Canceled)

64-67. (Canceled)

68. (Currently amended) A method for preparing 4-methyl-2-phenylpiperazine comprising hydrolyzing ~~the a~~ compound of claim 49 using an acid.

69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the acid is sulfuric acid.

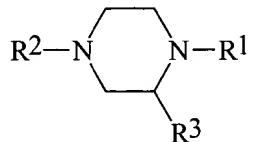
70. (Currently amended) A method for preparing ~~3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) 3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl)~~ pyridine comprising:
hydrolyzing ~~the a~~ compound of claim 49 to form 4-methyl-2-phenylpiperazine; and
reacting 4-methyl-2-phenylpiperazine with a 3-cyano-pyridine to form ~~3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) 3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl)~~ pyridine.

71. (Currently amended) A method for preparing mirtazapine comprising the steps of:
hydrolyzing ~~the a~~ compound of claim 49 to form 4-methyl-2-phenylpiperazine;
reacting 4-methyl-2-phenylpiperazine with a 3-cyano-pyridine to form 3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) pyridine;

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converting 3-cyano-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) pyridine to 3-carboxy-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) pyridine; and
converting 3-carboxy-2-(4-methyl-2-phenyl-1-piperazinyl) pyridine to mirtazapine.

72. (Currently amended) A compound of the formula:



IV

wherein R¹ denotes phenylalkoxy, tosyl, benzoyl, or formyl; R² denotes alkyl, ~~alkoxy, phenyl, phenyloxy or phenylalkoxy~~; and R³ denotes phenyl.

73. (Previously presented) The compound of claim 72, wherein R¹ is formyl, benzoyl, or tosyl.

74. (Canceled)

75. (Previously presented) The compound of claim 72, wherein R² is methyl.

76. (Currently amended) The compound of claim 72, wherein R¹ is tosyl ~~and R² is alkyl~~.